

Three Boardwalks, Two Towns, One Morning

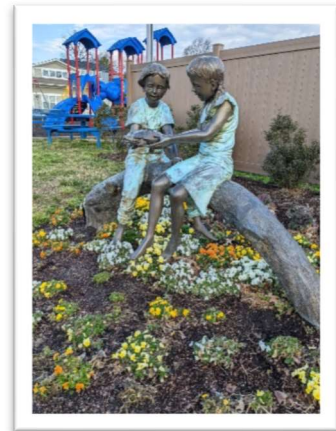
March 2022

When a pastel sun rises over the Chesapeake Bay on a spring day that promises perfection – and you happen to be in the company of a kindergartner who rises before dawn – a little creativity and an abundance of outdoor fun is the answer when asked, “What are we going to do today?”

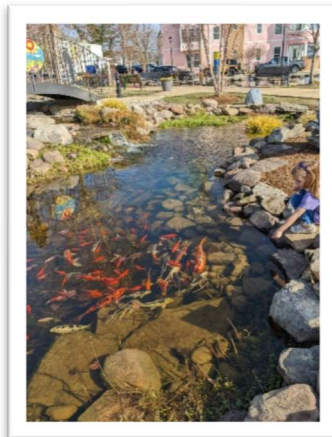


There's nothing quite as exciting as ambling through a waterfront town (or two) with entertaining stops along the way. North Beach and Chesapeake Beach are just such towns. They offer walkable streets, friendly natives, ample places for marsh, creek or bay views and unique places to shop, take pictures and graze along the way.

On our particular June-like day in March, we started around 9 a.m. with **Callis Park**, at 9018 Chesapeake Avenue, and it was nearly deserted. There was ample free parking adjacent and the playground was clean, bright and offered separate options for children under 4 years old and for older ones. It was immediately declared “Awesome.”



While it seemed questionable we'd ever leave the playground, the promise of two ponds filled with live koi fish was a strong draw and led to

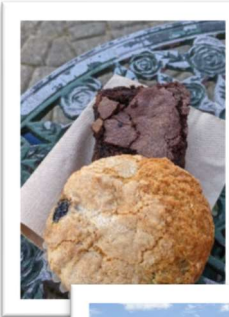


our next stop. Just a block away on 3rd Street, **Sunrise Garden** is a great place to linger. With plenty of benches, fun bridges, waterfalls, sculptural art, great views of the Chesapeake Bay and the resident koi fish in a kaleidoscope of colors, it is a nearly irresistible place to spend a quiet morning.

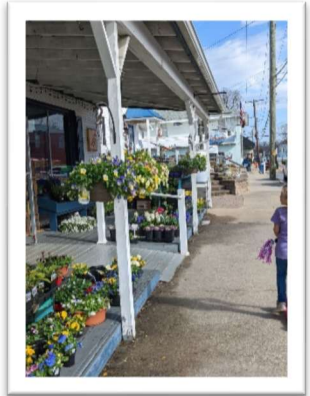
Directly across the street, the 7-block-long **North Beach boardwalk** beckons toward the downtown area with shops, a fishing pier, public beach, restaurants and expansive views of the bay. In the off season, access to the beach is free

when the gates are open and, even though the water is still nippy in March, a quick doffing of socks and shoes reminded of warmer beach days to come.





After an hour (or more?) exploring, we visited [The Bakist](#) at 9132 Bay Avenue North for a delicious brownie and blueberry muffin. Offering a variety of treats like scones, cookies and cupcakes – and as a stop on [Calvert County's Sweet Treat Trail](#) – the bakery is not to be missed. Limited outdoor seating is available and a few moments here noshing or people watching is time well-spent.



Next, hop back in the car, or if you're the hardy type walk about six blocks through the residential area, to 4030 11th Street to visit [Wetlands Overlook Park](#). The park is small, but if you are quiet, the peacefulness here can be especially enjoyable. There are two gazebos, a few places to sit and a short boardwalk that takes you into the world of migratory water fowl. If you pay careful attention, you may even spot turtles, bald eagles or a heron.

Next, head south on Rt. 261 (Bayside Road) about a mile and a-half to the other twin, the bayside town of Chesapeake Beach. Here you can catch the third boardwalk of the morning, the [Chesapeake Beach Railway Trail](#), just off Gordon Stinnett Avenue. Spanning nearly two miles on a long-abandoned railroad trail that served Chesapeake Beach in the early 1900s, this boardwalk trail follows



Fishing Creek and provides a bird's-eye view of life on the Chesapeake Bay and her tributaries. The trail is home to a variety of wildlife including foxes, red-winged blackbirds, terns, geese, ducks and a pair of [nesting ospreys](#).

A quick hop across Bayside Road to the [Rod 'N' Reel Resort](#) at 4160 Mears Avenue brings the old days of railroad travel up



close at the [Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum](#), memorializing the town's creation by the Chesapeake

Beach Railway Company as a destination resort more than 100 years ago. The museum is open seasonally from April to October but even when closed you can see "Dolores," an original parlor car on site.



Make your final adventure another stop on the [Sweet Treat Trail](#) with a visit to [Butterflies & Wishes Tea & Sweets](#) located at 3819 Harbor Road. To-go treats include bubble tea, scones, cupcakes, macarons AND macaroons (yes, there is a difference). Or, call ahead and make a reservation for a real tea party experience complete with fancy dishes, tea sandwiches and a true Alice in Wonderland vibe.



Take my advice

- Hours:
 - North Beach Boardwalk: Open year around, all hours
 - Wetland Overlook Boardwalk: Open year around, dawn to dusk
 - Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail: Open year around, all hours
- Fees: All the boardwalks are free. There is a [fee](#) to access the public beach at North Beach in-season but it's free from October to April. Callis Park, Sunrise Garden and the Chesapeake Beach Railway Museum are also free.
- Get an early start; the boardwalks can crowd, especially on great-weather days.
- Bring your pups but make sure they're well-behaved and leashed.
- The three boardwalks mentioned are wheelchair accessible.
- Bring binoculars for wildlife spotting.
- Bug spray and sun block is recommended for summer months.
- Wetlands Overlook Park is a great place to picnic – and offers real bathrooms at the visitor center.
- Grab a Chesapeake Beach Railway Trail "Nature Bingo" pamphlet at the trailhead to see how many critters you can find.

